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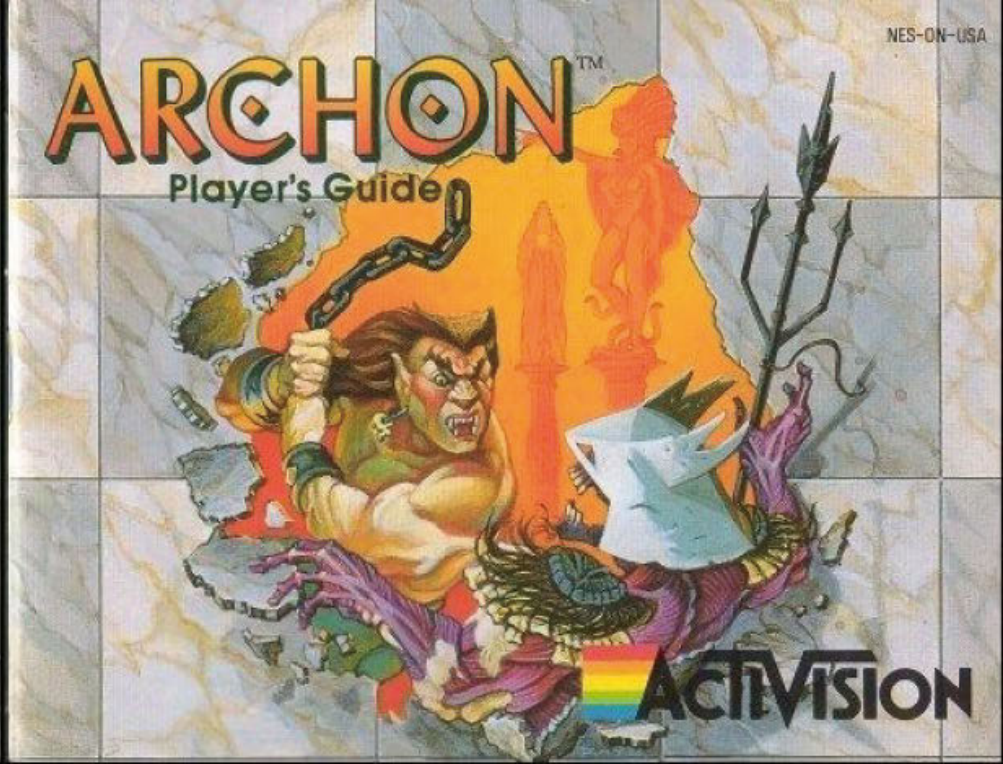
ARCHON™

Player's Guide



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Archon

Developed by Bullet-Proof Software.
Produced by Tom Sloper.
Product Management by John Crompton.
Testing by Tom Bellamy and Steve Imes.
Product Specialists: Perry Rodgers and Tony Van.
Player's Guide by Hunter Cone.
Desktop Publishing by GlennHills Graphics Co.

The Struggle Continues

The Light and the Dark: two forces locked in an eternal struggle for domination. The two sides are led by the spell-casting Wizard and Sorceress, and championed by armies of mythical beasts and legendary heroes possessing incredible powers. They meet on a battlefield of light and dark squares. Creatures gain strength when occupying a square of their own color and lose strength when occupying a square of the opposing force's color. This positioning is crucial when the creatures confront each other for possession of the squares.

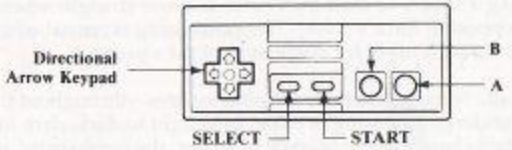
But that's not all. Some squares are Lumina squares—throughout the battle, these squares undergo a phasing of color, from light to dark, dark to light. This creates a constant change in the balance of power: the combatants' strength ebbs and flows as the squares shift colors beneath them.

It takes the plotting precision of a chess master combined with the lightning-fast reflexes of a gladiator to determine the outcome of this clash. The creatures move one at a time around the field, boldly challenging each other for possession of the squares. When they meet, they engage in one-on-one combat; only one emerges to claim the victory and the square.

The Ultimate Goal? The capture and control of the five power points— or— complete elimination of the opposite force.

Getting Started

1. With your game system and TV or monitor off, insert the *Archon* cartridge into your Nintendo Entertainment System as described in your owner's guide.



2. Turn on your game system and TV or monitor. When the *Archon* title screen appears, press the **START** button to begin play.

3. Use the up or down arrow keys on the control deck and press the **A** button to select a one- or two-player game. On the menus that follow, decide if you want to be the Dark or Light side, and which side makes the first move.

Marching to War

The regiments march onto the field and establish themselves on their beginning squares. Their names and movement ranges flash onto the screen as they file in. This parade can be sped up by pressing **Up** on the arrow pad. Once everyone is in place, the battle begins.

A frame appears next to the side that takes the first turn.

To make your move, use the arrow pad to position the frame on the creature you want to move and press the **A** button. Use the arrow pad again to maneuver him within his range limits (which appear on the screen below the field), and press the **A** button again to situate him in that square.

Note: As long as you don't press the **A** button the second time, you can continue to maneuver the creature within his movement range. If you decide not to move that creature, return him to his original square and press the **A** button. If you want to reposition a Ground traveler, you must take the same route back to his square so he doesn't go out of his movement range.

If you want to attack an enemy-held square, move your creature onto that square and press the **A** button. The screen changes to the Combat Arena (see "Confrontation" below).

Ground travelers can't march through squares held by other creatures. Fliers and teleporters can move anywhere within their range.

When you've completed your turn, the frame switches to the other side of the field so the other player can move.

Confrontation

When you challenge a square held by the enemy, the screen changes to the Combat Arena. You then engage in a head-to-head duel to the death.

Use the arrow pad to maneuver your creature around the Arena, and press the **A** button to attack in the direction you're moving (your creature doesn't move while its attacking—firing its weapon, etc.). Your timing is very important, as the speed of attack and amount of time needed to ready the weapon varies with each creature. You'll hear a bell tone — a high pitch for the Light warrior, a low pitch for the Dark — to indicate you're ready to attack again. If you keep pressing the **A** button, you'll fire as soon as you're able.

The obstacles inside the Arena are constantly moving and changing. Sometimes, you can burst right through them. Other times, they'll slow both you and any missile you're firing. And at other times, they'll completely block any movement or attack.

At the bottom of the Arena are the Lifelines. They indicate how powerful each creature is at the beginning of battle and throughout combat. The lifeline drains down as the contest continues, measuring hits each creature has absorbed. When a lifeline is completely drained of color, that creature has received its death blow, and the match is over.

The winner doesn't come out of it unscathed. Its strength is also diminished by the contest, and is replenished only after it's allowed to rest for several turns, or the Heal spell is cast upon it (see "Spells" later in this guide).

The Champions of the Opposing Forces

The Light and Dark forces recruited different warriors to fill their ranks. Between the sides, no two creatures are identical, though their powers are similar. Each mythical beast and hero has its own rules of movement and unique fighting power. Examine the following descriptions carefully. This information is invaluable for planning your attack strategy.

The Light Forces

Wizard: As the leader of the Light side, he begins the battle on his home power point and rarely ventures from it. He's the only Light warrior able to cast spells.

Weapon: fireball
Weapon force: strong
Weapon speed: medium
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: short

Unicorn: This swift and agile beast sends out a searing bolt of energy from its single horn.

Weapon: energy bolt
Weapon force: moderate
Weapon speed: fast
Weapon recharge time: short
Lifeline length: short

Archer: The Archer wields his bow with unmatched skill, supplied by his bottomless quiver of magic arrows.

Weapon: arrows
Weapon force: weak
Weapon speed: medium
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: very short

Golem: Though his movements are slow, this huge man-shaped monster rips boulders from the earth and hurls them with all his legendary might.

Weapon: boulders
Weapon force: strong
Weapon speed: slow
Weapon recharge time: very long
Lifeline length: long

Valkyrie: The air is her element, and her magical flying spear returns to her hand of its own accord.

Weapon: magic spear
Weapon force: moderate
Weapon speed: slow
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: short

Djinni: The mythic cousin to the wind summons a mighty tornado to whirl away all in its path.

Weapon: whirlwind
Weapon force: moderate
Weapon speed: medium
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: short

Phoenix: This mighty bird explodes into a blaze of fire that renders it invincible to attack and sizzles anything in its perimeter.

Weapon: self-explosion
Weapon force: strong
Weapon speed: slow
Weapon recharge time: very long
Lifeline length: long

Knight: With nerves of steel, he wields his deadly sword in hand-to-hand combat.

Weapon: sword
Weapon force: weak
Weapon speed: instant
Weapon recharge time: very short
Lifeline length: very short

The Dark Forces

Sorceress: The leader of the Dark forces, she's the Wizard's equal in power, though her lightning bolts are faster to the target. She is the only spell-caster for the Dark side.

Weapon: lightning bolt
Weapon force: moderate
Weapon speed: fast
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: short

Basilisk: This is the creature with the evil eye, blasting everything in its line of sight.

Weapon: eye beam
Weapon force: strong
Weapon speed: fast
Weapon recharge time: short
Lifeline length: very short

Manticore: This half-lion, half-scorpion beast slings spikes from its tail with incredible accuracy.

Weapon: tail spikes
Weapon force: weak
Weapon speed: slow
Weapon recharge time: long
Lifeline length: short

Troll: Dull and ungainly but strong and hard to destroy, he grabs boulders and hurls them at all in his path.

Weapon: boulder
Weapon force: strong
Weapon speed: slow
Weapon recharge time: very long
Lifeline length: long

Shapeshifter: This changeling has no shape of its own; in combat, it assumes the mirror image of its opponent, matching it exactly in speed and power.

Weapon: varies
Weapon force: varies
Weapon speed: varies
Weapon recharge time: varies
Lifeline length: varies

Dragon: Second in power only to the Sorceress, the Dragon is unmatched in battle, his flaming breath scorching all foolish enough to get in his way.

Weapon: fiery breath
Weapon force: very strong
Weapon speed: medium
Weapon recharge time: very long
Lifeline length: very long

Banshee: This restless spirit feeds off the souls of her foes. Her deadly wail destroys all within earshot, and she alone can move while attacking.

Weapon: scream
Weapon force: moderate
Weapon speed: instant
Weapon recharge time: very long
Lifeline length: short

Goblin: A foot soldier like the Knight, the Goblin uses his club to fight in hand-to-hand combat.

Weapon: club
Weapon force: weak
Weapon speed: instant
Weapon recharge time: very short
Lifeline length: very short

The Lumina Squares

The Lumina squares are constantly changing their color, moving through six shades of blue—from lightest to lighter to light to darker to darkest and back again (the two middle phases share the same shade of blue). The squares go to the next phase in their cycle after the second player's turn.

The color of the square you're occupying can either heighten or diminish your power in doing combat with the enemy forces. Creatures of the Light force are more powerful on light squares than on dark squares, and creatures of the Dark force are stronger on dark squares than on light ones. Therefore, domination of the board also shifts with the color phases. It's important to learn the pattern of these phases and use them to your advantage in planning your strategy both in attacking the enemy and in using spells (see "Spells" below).

Spells

The Wizard and the Sorceress are the only ones with the magical power of casting spells. Use this magic carefully — this power does have its limits. The Wizard and Sorceress can cast each of their spells only one time per game. No spells can be cast at a character on a power point. Every time they cast a spell, the magicians become weaker and more vulnerable to attack. As a result, their life lines are shorter.

To cast a spell, position the frame on your spell-caster and press the **A** button. Then press the **A** button again to summon the spells. At **Select a Spell**, press the down arrow on the arrow pad to cycle through all the spells. When you see the spell you want to conjure, press the **A** button to carry it out. If you decide you don't want to cast any spell, choose **Cancel** at the end of the spell list.

Teleport

The **Teleport** spell enables the spell-caster to move any of its own creatures to any other square not occupied by its own side. You can use this to directly challenge an opponent for a square, or to locate your creature in an empty square. An imprisoned creature (see "Imprison" below) can't be teleported.

When the screen prompts you, move the frame to the creature you want to teleport, and press the **A** button. Then, at the screen prompt, move the frame to the square where you want to move your creature and press the **A** button. If you're challenging an opposing square, you're taken immediately to the Combat Arena.

If you change your mind, you can cancel this spell by pressing the **B** button before you select the square where you want the creature to go. Once you select the square, the spell is cast.

Heal

The **Heal** spell enables the spell-caster to replenish the strength of any combat-worn creature.

When the screen prompts you, move the frame to the creature you want to heal, and press the **A** button.

If you change your mind, you can cancel this spell by pressing the **B** button before you select the creature for healing. Once you select the creature, the spell is cast.

Shift Time

The **Shift Time** spell enables the spell-caster to reverse the color-shifting pattern of the Lumina squares in either of two ways. Squares that had been growing lighter, for example, will switch directions and start growing darker. Or, if the spell is cast at either the lightest or darkest part of the color phase, the colors on the board reverse, with the color-shifting pattern following accordingly. The spell takes effect after the second player's turn.

Exchange

The **Exchange** spell enables the spell-caster to have any two creatures trade places. You can have two of your own creatures trade places, or have one of your creatures switch with an opposing creature, or have two opposing creatures change places.

When the screen prompts you, move the frame to the first creature you want to exchange, and press the **A** button. Then, at the screen prompt, move the frame to the creature you want to switch places with and press the **A** button.

If you change your mind, you can cancel this spell by pressing the **B** button before you select the second creature to be exchanged. Once you select this creature, the spell is cast.

Summon Elemental

The **Summon Elemental** spell enables the spell-caster to call into battle one of the four elements, each with its own battle characteristics: earth, air, fire or water. Once the fight is over, the element vanishes, even if it wins, and the square is empty. If the element loses the contest, the victorious creature retains the square.

When one of the elements is summoned, the screen prompts you to move the element to the opponent you wish to fight, and press the **A** button. The screen immediately changes to the Combat Arena.

Note: You can't cancel this spell, so be sure you want to use it before you summon it.

Revive

The **Revive** spell enables the spell-caster to resurrect a creature previously downed in combat. There must be a Charmed (empty) square next to the spell-caster for this spell to work. Otherwise, it can't be cast.

The creatures already defeated in battle appear beside the battle field. At the prompt, move the frame to the one you want to revive, and press the **A** button. At the second prompt, move the revitalized creature to a Charmed square, and press the **A** button.

If you change your mind, you can cancel this spell by pressing the **B** button before you select the Charmed square. Once you select the square, the spell is cast.

Imprison

The **Imprison** spell enables the spell-caster to temporarily freeze an opposing creature, preventing it from leaving its square. It can, however, continue to fight off attackers. It remains imprisoned until the color of the Lumina squares matches the color of the imprisoned creature. For example, if a Light creature is imprisoned, it won't be released until the Lumina cycle reaches its lightest phase.

When the screen prompts you, move the frame to the opposing creature you want to imprison, and press the **A** button. If it isn't a strategic time for you to cast this spell because the creature's time of imprisonment will be very short, the prompt will tell you it's a waste of a spell, and you'll be told to choose another.

If you change your mind, you can cancel this spell by pressing the **B** button before you select a creature to imprison. Once you select the creature, the spell is cast.

Victory

The game is over when one side occupies all five power points, or knocks out the opponent's forces. A message will appear on the screen proclaiming the victor, including the number of turns made during the game. It's also possible for the game to end in a draw.

Fine-Tuning Your Strategy

Learn the phases of the Lumina squares, and stay on the squares that match your color as much as possible. The effect of the square's shading on your power is great.

Don't jam up your front line. Provide openings for your Ground movers to pass through. The more mobile and flexible your troops are, the better chance you have of marching to victory.

Prevent the early demise of your Wizard or Sorceress — you could be lost without them.

While in the Combat Arena, make your enemy waste a shot; then while he's re-arming, fire.

Know the strengths and abilities of your opponent before you attack: forewarned is forearmed.

Watch out for the obstacles in the Combat Arena. Running into a solid barrier could be disastrous.

Use the Exchange spell to exchange a more powerful opponent encroaching upon your territory with a weaker opponent.

If all appears lost, avoid combat, and you may achieve a tie game.

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